

Family-Centered Services: What Should I Know?



*This information was adapted from
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*BabyNet works with many organizations and agencies
to assist families of infants and toddlers with
developmental delays and/or disabilities.*



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The BabyNet System is committed to providing “Family-Centered Services.” This means that BabyNet providers and families work together to find ways to meet family’s needs in a way that is most helpful to them.

BabyNet has adopted seven principles of family-centered services:

Principle 1

*Families are involved in all areas of their child’s services.
This helps assure the well-being and development of children.*

For example, providers should

- Know how to help families become their child’s advocate.
- Empower families to find and use their own strengths.
- Assist families in making their own choices and decisions.
- Recognize the family’s and child’s strengths and successes.

Principle 2

*Trust, respect, honesty, and open communication are necessary
for a good family-provider relationship.*

For example, providers should

- Practice confidentiality.
- Use good communication skills, including active listening.
- Show care and concern for families.
- Be aware of and respect the family’s culture, beliefs and attitudes as they plan and assist the family.
- Follow through in a timely manner.

Principle 3

Families are involved in all areas of services. They assist the IFSP team in determining the amount and type of services they want to use.

For example, providers should

- Act as teacher, advisor, coordinator, middleman or advocate, when appropriate.
- Support and encourage family decisions.
- Partner with families and use ways that will help the families help themselves.

Principle 4

The ongoing relationship between families and providers helps families identify their priorities, hopes, needs, goals and wishes, and ways to meet them.

For example, providers should

- Help families find solutions that fit their lifestyle.
- Help families identify and access people around them that may provide support and resources.
- Help families gain new strengths and abilities.
- Encourage, and give feedback and guidance to families.

Principle 5

Efforts are made to build upon and use families’ informal community support systems before professional, formal services.

For example, providers should

- Understand the importance of family, friends and community support to the health and well-being of families.
- Assist families with making contacts in their communities to strengthen their support network.
- Help agencies and service providers clearly identify what resources they offer families to meet specific needs and concerns.
- Share community resource information with families.

Principle 6

Providers and families work as a team to provide resources that best match what the family needs.

For example, providers should

- Include and consider families as equal team members.
- Present service options and resources to families for their choice.
- Work productively with other providers and teams.
- Function outside of their role using a variety of consulting techniques.
- Clearly understand each agency’s resources.

Principle 7

Support and resources are flexible and meet the changing needs of families.

For example, providers should

- Ensure that information and steps to getting services are simple and easily understood by families.
- Remove barriers that may prevent families from receiving services.
- Check with families often.
- Update families’ files to record their changing needs and concerns.
- Make appointments that are convenient for both the provider and family.
- Ask families how they feel about their child’s progress.



Basis for Family-Centered Principles or Practices:

- All people are basically good.
- All people have strengths.
- All people need support and encouragement.
- All people have different but equally important skills, abilities and knowledge.
- All families have hopes, dreams and wishes for their children.
- Families are resourceful, but all families do not have equal access to resources.
- Families should be assisted in ways that help them maintain dignity and hope.
- Families should be equal partners in the relationship with service providers.
- Providers work with families.